

DCFS Weekly Update From the State Office

Friday, June 2, 2000

Budget Status—State Office Changes

By Ken Patterson

Last week I mentioned that some State Office personnel were being reassigned to regional or other DHS positions. It's the State Office way of helping with the impact the regions have felt during the hiring freeze.

The following is a list of who is being reassigned and where to: Paul Prince, from Associate Director in the State Office to Associate Region Director in Western Region; Wayne Airmet, from Director of Finance to Bureau of Internal Review and Audit in DHS; Dianne Warner-Kearney, from State Office Specialist to Supervisor in the Salt Lake Region; Doug Call, from Information Analyst in SAFE to Supervisor in Salt Lake Region; Bob Lewis, from Information Analyst Supervisor in SAFE to a DHS position; Kate Jensen, from State Office Specialist to Family Preservation In-Home Specialist in Salt Lake Region; Lance Martin, from Finance to Foster Care Worker in Granite Region; Margaret Jones, from Support Services Supervisor to a DHS position; Steve Brown, from an Information Analyst in SAFE to a Foster Care Worker in Salt Lake Region; and Barbara Burwell, from Personnel Analyst to a DHS position. Please welcome these folks to their new assignments. They have each contributed to the State Office effort and will be missed.

Rumor Confirmation—From Seven to Five?

By Ken Patterson

A memo that Robin Arnold-Williams and I released yesterday confirmed what some of you might have been hearing for about a week. A work group has been created to examine how to streamline and improve DCFS Administration in Salt Lake County. The three-region approach that we have used for the past three years has received mixed reviews...high marks for creating neighborhood identity, but less praise for communication and decision-making with our institutional partners such as courts, mental health providers, and contractors.

LaRay Brown, Granite Region Director will lead the work group, which will include Spence Morgan, Heber Tippetts, line staff, a supervisor, and Paul Vincent from the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group. Their charge? To reduce administration positions in Salt Lake County by 25% in order to create more direct service staff.

Some opportunists have tried to tie the Adoption Special Needs payment reductions to the assertion of too many administrative staff in Salt Lake. Not so. The two budgets have always been separate and distinct. The Adoption Special Needs is overspent because of increased adoptions and disagreements over what type of behavioral health care the Medicaid card should cover. However, in this leaner time, if we can help any direct service through administrative efficiencies, we should do so.

LaRay Brown and the work group will have 90 to 120 days to develop a plan. ***Stay tuned.***

House Bill 259—Dual Track Intake

By Abel Ortiz

House Bill 259 allows DCFS to establish a pilot program for a dual response system for handling child abuse and neglect calls. The bill requires DCFS to select one to three regions where child abuse calls can be directed in one of two directions: 1) cases involving serious allegations of abuse or neglect will receive a traditional CPS investigation, and 2) less serious allegations involving children six years and older will be referred for a family assessment.

Each region management team has been scheduled for an overview of the implementation process within their region during the months of May and early June 2000. Each region can determine if other region staff will attend the overview. The overview will consist of the following:

- General overview of House Bill 259 requirements and Board recommendations.
- A demonstration of how the system's requirements will be documented on SAFE.
- A review of the regional self-assessment process and implementation steps.
- A question and answer time for regional staff.

The regions that want to be designated as pilot sites will submit an implementation proposal by June 20, 2000. The implementation proposal should include an implementation schedule. These implementation proposals will then be forwarded to the DHS Executive Director for consideration and identification of the pilot regions by July 1, 2000.

Update on Policy Changes

By Steven Bradford

DCFS staff should use this notice of works in progress to make comments and suggestions before policies become final. Contact Steve Bradford at 801-538-8210 or by e-mail. Policies currently in progress are as follows:

- Adoption subsidy policy is the subject of a public hearing at the DCFS Board meeting on June 22, 2000, 1:00 p.m., at 645 East 4500 South in Salt Lake City. We will be sending notice of the hearing to foster parents and adoptive parents. If you have families that would like to attend, please make them aware of the hearing.
- I sent the new rules for selecting foster and adoptive parents by e-mail to all DCFS staff on May 1, 2000. The rules are now waiting to be published for public comment.
- Extensive revisions to the out-of-home policy have been drafted and should be published with the next quarterly update.

- CPS policy has been completely rewritten and is being prepared for presentation to the DCFS Board, probably in July 2000.
- A revision of the hearing rights in the Foster Parents Due Process rule has been approved by the DCFS Board and will be published for public comment in June 2000.

SAFE Update—Clarification

By Robert Lewis

The information contained in last week's newsletter regarding SAFE release 2.207 and the Family Assessment Service case type was unclear. Please note that release 2.207 is planned for deployment in late July 2000 in all regions. The Family Assessment Service is related to House Bill 259 and will be piloted in three regions (refer to "House Bill 259—Dual Track Intake" article by Abel Ortiz for additional information).

The SAFE Help Desk phone number is (801) 538-4141. SAFE users need to continue to call the Help Desk to report system problems and make suggestions for improvements, as these calls are pertinent for SAFE to meet the needs of DCFS field staff and the programs in which we are involved.